

Reducing youth alcohol use through Positive Community Norms in Minnesota

Positive Community Norms is making a real, positive impact in the rates of youth alcohol use. Positive Community Norms cultivates true, lasting cultural transformation by understanding not just what's concerning, but also what's hopeful.

About Positive Community Norms

The Positive Community Norms framework works on several levels at once, involving students, parents, teachers and the entire community.

Positive Community Norms is based on an extensive body of data. Its foundation is what's called "the Science of the Positive," the study of how positive factors impacts culture and experience.

Positive Community Norms closes the gap between what we believe to be true and what is actually true. Society tends to emphasize the problem to the point that it is easy to think that the problem is more common than it is. By talking about positive behaviors rather than emphasizing the negative, inadvertently making negative behaviors seem common or even attractive, Positive Community Norms brings forward the message that the positive is the norm.

The Positive Community Norms approach has shown itself nationally to be effective in creating meaningful change in health and safety issues, including traffic safety, underage drinking, binge drinking, child maltreatment and many others.

Grants

Between July 2006 and June 2016, two sets of 5-year grants were awarded to independent school districts, local non-profits, local public health departments or to county attorney's offices. Funds came from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Grantees followed seven steps of the Montana Model of Positive Community Norms Communication:

- **Step 1. Planning & Environmental Advocacy**
- **Step 2. Baseline Data**
- **Step 3. Message Development**
- **Step 4. Communication Plan**
- **Step 5. Pilot Test & Refine**
- **Step 6. Implement**
- **Step 7. Evaluate**

In 2016 Minnesota started its third round of funding. Nine new grants funding 10 school districts have been awarded with nearly \$9 Million, an average of \$200,000 a year each, in grants.

focus on the positive + educate about actual norms = lasting behavior change

Results

Results In the first group of schools from July 2004 to June 2010 found that average 9th grade 30-day alcohol use fell during the grant period:

- **2004: 35.5 percent used alcohol in the previous 30 days.**
- **2010: 22 percent used alcohol in the previous 30 days.**

As well as *after* the grants were over:

- **2013: 14 percent used alcohol in the previous 30 days.**

In total,

- **Between 2004 to 2013, 9th grade alcohol use in the previous 30 days went from 28.6 percent above the state average to 4.8 percent below average.**

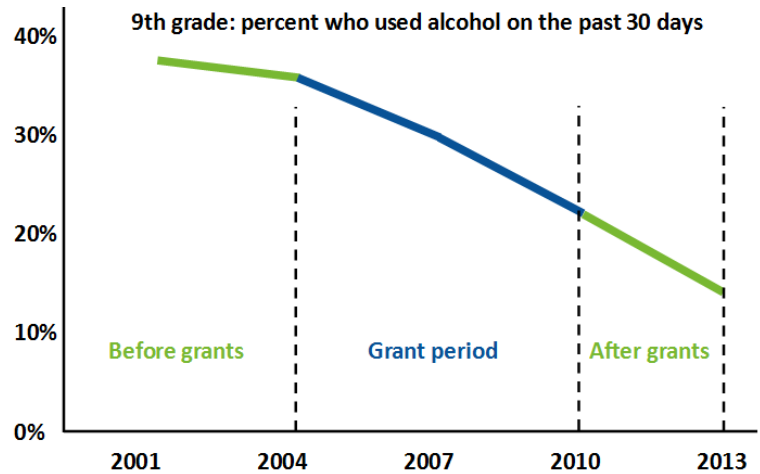
For the second group of grantees, 2010 to 2016, the percentage of both middle school and high school students who had ever used alcohol went down significantly:

- **23 percent for high school students**
- **50 percent for jr. high students**

In addition,

- **2010: 25.9 percent of 9th graders used alcohol in the previous 30 days.**
- **2016: 17.2 percent of 9th graders used alcohol in the previous 30 days.**
- **From 2010 to 2016, the average 9th grade 30-day alcohol use rate decreased 33.4 percent.**

2004 to 2010 grantees



2010 to 2016 grantees

